

2009 Annual Employee Survey Results

Social Security Administration

We administered the 2009 Annual Employee Survey (AES) to our employees to learn about their opinions on working at Social Security. The results of the survey will help us understand areas where we have strengths and where we have opportunities for improvements. This document presents the general results from the 2009 AES.

Survey Content

The 2009 AES contained questions that covered the following areas:

- Personal Work Experiences;
- Recruitment, Development, and Retention;
- Performance Culture;
- Leadership;
- Job Satisfaction, and
- Demographics

The AES includes 40 questions required by regulations that address employee satisfaction and engagement, which are factors that influence employee retention.

Survey Administration

During 2009, government-wide regulations (5 CFR § 250, see [OPM-Surveys](#)) required us to conduct an annual employee survey. Unlike the 2008 Federal Human Capital Survey that the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) administered across the federal government, each agency was responsible for administering a 2009 annual employee survey. We enlisted the services of the OPM Leadership and Talent Management Solutions for survey administration. We conducted the survey online from October 26, 2009 through November 16, 2009. We sent email invitations to employees who were selected at random to participate in the survey. The invitations included a link to the survey web site and a unique identification number and password to access the survey.

Description of the Sample and Response Rate

OPM Leadership and Talent Management Solutions selected a representative, stratified, random sample of **2,100** employees, from an employee population of all full-time, permanent, non-seasonal employees as of September 25, 2009, to participate in the survey. We achieved a response rate of **64** percent, with surveys completed by **1,346** employees. We counted employees who completed at least one of the survey questions as respondents, although the majority of employees completed all questions.

The respondents were representative of the agency population in all demographic characteristics except that White respondents were somewhat overrepresented and Black or African American respondents were somewhat underrepresented compared to the overall agency population. The following table contains demographic information on our employee population and the AES respondents.

GENDER	SSA Population	AES Respondents
Male	32%	32%
Female	68%	68%
ARE YOU: HISPANIC OR LATINO	SSA Population	AES Respondents
Yes	14%	15%
No	86%	85%
RACIAL CATEGORY	SSA Population	AES Respondents
White	59%	65%
Black or African American	34%	25%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	>1%	1%
Asian	6%	4%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2%	1%
Two or more races (not Hispanic or Latino)	>1%	3%
SUPERVISORY STATUS	SSA Population	AES Respondents
Non-supervisor	89%	88%
Supervisor/Manager	11%	12%

Percentages may not add due to rounding

General Results

We analyzed the results of the AES and areas where employee rankings were positive and negative. Positive responses are responses of “strongly agree,” “agree,” “very satisfied,” or “satisfied.” Negative responses are responses of “disagree,” “strongly disagree,” “dissatisfied,” or “very dissatisfied.” Our survey results show strengths (i.e. 65 percent or more positive) on all of the questions in Personal Work Experiences category and strengths on 75 percent of the questions in the Recruitment, Development, and Retention category. The top five positive responses are:

- Question **10** - The work I do is important.
- Question **9** - I know how my work relates to the agency's goals and priorities.
- Question **1** - The people I work with cooperate to get the job done.
- Question **4** - I like the kind of work I do.
- Question **3** - My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment.

Our survey results show a weakness (i.e. 35% or more negative) on question 20 in the Performance Culture category. The top five negative responses are:

- Question **20** - Pay raises depend on how well employees perform their jobs.
- Question **16** - In my work unit, steps are taken to deal with a poor performer who cannot or will not improve.
- Question **35** - How satisfied are you with your opportunity to get a better job in your organization?
- Question **15** - Promotions in my work unit are based on merit.
- Question **19** - In my work unit, differences in performance are recognized in a meaningful way.

The percentage of positive responses exceeded the number of neutral or negative responses on 38 of the 40 questions. The percentage of negative responses exceeded the number of positive or neutral responses on question 20. The percentage of neutral responses exceeded the number of positive or negative responses on question 16.

Itemized Employee Responses by Question

Federal regulations required the survey questions contained in this section. We marked the 21 questions that are strengths (65 percent or more positive) with a “(+)” symbol and marked the 1 question that is a weakness (35 percent or higher negative) with a “(-)” symbol.

PERSONAL WORK EXPERIENCES			
(+) 1. The people I work with cooperate to get the job done.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	476	35.4%	% Positive
Agree	692	51.4%	86.8%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	99	7.4%	
Disagree	64	4.8%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	14	1.0%	5.8%
# of Respondents	1,345	100%	
(+) 2. I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organization.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	353	26.3%	% Positive
Agree	558	41.5%	67.8%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	211	15.7%	
Disagree	169	12.6%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	52	3.9%	16.5%
# of Respondents	1,343	100%	
(+) 3. My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	551	40.9%	% Positive
Agree	566	42.1%	83.0%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	131	9.7%	
Disagree	75	5.6%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	23	1.7%	7.3%
# of Respondents	1,346	100%	
(+) 4. I like the kind of work I do.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	579	43.0%	% Positive
Agree	565	42.0%	85.0%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	142	10.5%	
Disagree	47	3.5%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	13	1.0%	4.5%
# of Respondents	1,346	100%	

(+) – Strength (-) – Weakness

Percentages may not add due to rounding

PERSONAL WORK EXPERIENCES		
(+) 5. I have trust and confidence in my supervisor.	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	455	33.9%
Agree	452	33.7%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	239	17.8%
Disagree	120	8.9%
Strongly Disagree	76	5.7%
# of Respondents	1,342	100%
(+) 6. Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by your immediate supervisor/team leader?	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	524	39.2%
Agree	419	31.3%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	280	20.9%
Disagree	71	5.3%
Strongly Disagree	44	3.3%
# of Respondents	1,338	100%

% Positive
67.6%

% Negative
14.6%

% Positive
70.5%

% Negative
8.6%

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND RETENTION		
(+) 7. The workforce has the job-relevant knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish organizational goals.	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	274	20.4%
Agree	736	54.8%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	204	15.2%
Disagree	90	6.7%
Strongly Disagree	25	1.9%
Do Not Know	13	1.0%
# of Respondents	1,342	100%
8. My work unit is able to recruit people with the right skills.	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	183	13.6%
Agree	579	43.1%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	337	25.1%
Disagree	147	11.0%
Strongly Disagree	44	3.3%
Do Not Know	52	3.9%
# of Respondents	1,342	100%
(+) 9. I know how my work relates to the agency's goals and priorities.	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	612	45.6%
Agree	655	48.8%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	49	3.6%
Disagree	16	1.2%
Strongly Disagree	6	0.4%
Do Not Know	5	0.4%
# of Respondents	1,343	100%

% Positive
75.3%

% Negative
8.6%

% Positive
56.8%

% Negative
14.2%

% Positive
94.3%

% Negative
1.6%

(+) – Strength (-) – Weakness

Percentages may not add due to rounding

RECRUITMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND RETENTION			
(+) 10. The work I do is important.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	906	67.4%	% Positive
Agree	379	28.2%	95.6%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	42	3.1%	
Disagree	10	0.8%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	3	0.2%	1.0%
Do Not Know	4	0.3%	
# of Respondents	1,344	100%	
(+) 11. Physical conditions (for example, noise level, temperature, lighting, cleanliness in the workplace) allow employees to perform their jobs well.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	362	26.9%	% Positive
Agree	567	42.1%	69.1%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	177	13.2%	
Disagree	171	12.7%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	67	5.0%	17.7%
Do Not Know	1	0.1%	
# of Respondents	1,345	100%	
(+) 12. Supervisors/team leaders in my work unit support employee development.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	374	27.8%	% Positive
Agree	537	40.0%	67.8%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	224	16.7%	
Disagree	119	8.9%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	77	5.7%	14.6%
Do Not Know	12	0.9%	
# of Respondents	1,343	100%	
(+) 13. My talents are used well in the workplace.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	369	27.5%	% Positive
Agree	559	41.6%	69.0%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	202	15.0%	
Disagree	138	10.3%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	70	5.2%	15.5%
Do Not Know	6	0.4%	
# of Respondents	1,344	100%	
14. My training needs are assessed.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	243	18.1%	% Positive
Agree	562	42.0%	60.1%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	276	20.6%	
Disagree	184	13.7%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	56	4.2%	17.9%
Do Not Know	19	1.4%	
# of Respondents	1,340	100%	

(+) – Strength (-) – Weakness

Percentages may not add due to rounding

PERFORMANCE CULTURE			
15. Promotions in my work unit are based on merit.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	151	11.2%	% Positive
Agree	355	26.5%	37.7%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	344	25.6%	
Disagree	197	14.7%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	176	13.1%	27.8%
Do Not Know	119	8.9%	
# of Respondents	1,342	100%	
16. In my work unit, steps are taken to deal with a poor performer who cannot or will not improve.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	97	7.2%	% Positive
Agree	351	26.2%	33.4%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	335	25.0%	
Disagree	234	17.5%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	188	14.0%	31.5%
Do Not Know	135	10.1%	
# of Respondents	1,340	100%	
17. Creativity and innovation are rewarded.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	173	12.9%	% Positive
Agree	466	34.8%	47.7%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	346	25.8%	
Disagree	173	12.9%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	102	7.6%	20.5%
Do Not Know	81	6.0%	
# of Respondents	1,341	100%	
(+) 18. In my most recent performance appraisal, I understood what I had to do to be rated at different performance levels (e.g., Fully Successful, Outstanding).	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	338	25.3%	% Positive
Agree	593	44.3%	69.5%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	158	11.8%	
Disagree	114	8.5%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	70	5.2%	13.7%
Do Not Know	66	4.9%	
# of Respondents	1,339	100%	

(+) – Strength (-) – Weakness

Percentages may not add due to rounding

PERFORMANCE CULTURE			
19. In my work unit, differences in performance are recognized in a meaningful way.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	146	10.9%	% Positive
Agree	418	31.2%	42.2%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	350	26.2%	
Disagree	259	19.4%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	90	6.7%	26.1%
Do Not Know	75	5.6%	
# of Respondents	1,338	100%	
(-) 20. Pay raises depend on how well employees perform their jobs.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	87	6.5%	% Positive
Agree	234	17.5%	23.9%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	340	25.3%	
Disagree	370	27.6%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	187	13.9%	41.5%
Do Not Know	124	9.2%	
# of Respondents	1,342	100%	
21. My performance appraisal is a fair reflection of my performance.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	249	18.5%	% Positive
Agree	594	44.1%	62.6%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	194	14.4%	
Disagree	171	12.7%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	82	6.1%	18.8%
Do Not Know	56	4.2%	
# of Respondents	1,346	100%	
22. Discussions with my supervisor/ team leader about my performance are worthwhile.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	271	20.2%	% Positive
Agree	558	41.6%	61.8%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	254	18.9%	
Disagree	144	10.7%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	83	6.2%	16.9%
Do Not Know	32	2.4%	
# of Respondents	1,342	100%	
(+) 23. Managers/supervisors/team leaders work well with employees of different backgrounds.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	302	22.5%	% Positive
Agree	577	43.0%	65.5%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	217	16.2%	
Disagree	123	9.2%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	73	5.4%	14.6%
Do Not Know	50	3.7%	
# of Respondents	1,342	100%	

(+) – Strength (-) – Weakness

Percentages may not add due to rounding

PERFORMANCE CULTURE		
(+) 24. My supervisor supports my need to balance work and family issues.	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	387	28.8%
Agree	578	43.1%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	201	15.0%
Disagree	78	5.8%
Strongly Disagree	70	5.2%
Do Not Know	28	2.1%
# of Respondents	1,342	100%

% Positive
71.9%

% Negative
11.0%

LEADERSHIP		
25. I have a high level of respect for my organization's senior leaders.	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	333	24.8%
Agree	526	39.2%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	253	18.8%
Disagree	132	9.8%
Strongly Disagree	82	6.1%
Do Not Know	18	1.3%
# of Respondents	1,344	100%
26. In my organization, leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce.	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	218	16.2%
Agree	474	35.3%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	326	24.3%
Disagree	195	14.5%
Strongly Disagree	110	8.2%
Do Not Know	20	1.5%
# of Respondents	1,343	100%
(+) 27. Managers review and evaluate the organization's progress toward meeting its goals and objectives.	Number	Percentage
Strongly Agree	290	21.6%
Agree	679	50.6%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	233	17.4%
Disagree	54	4.0%
Strongly Disagree	24	1.8%
Do Not Know	62	4.6%
# of Respondents	1,342	100%

% Positive
63.9%

% Negative
15.9%

% Positive
51.5%

% Negative
22.7%

% Positive
72.2%

% Negative
5.8%

(+) – Strength (-) – Weakness

Percentages may not add due to rounding

LEADERSHIP			
(+) 28. Employees are protected from health and safety hazards on the job.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	338	25.2%	% Positive
Agree	694	51.6%	76.8%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	164	12.2%	
Disagree	92	6.9%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	45	3.3%	10.2%
Do Not Know	11	0.8%	
# of Respondents	1,344	100%	
29. Employees have a feeling of personal empowerment with respect to work processes.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	160	11.9%	% Positive
Agree	482	35.9%	47.8%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	351	26.1%	
Disagree	219	16.3%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	91	6.8%	23.1%
Do Not Know	40	3.0%	
# of Respondents	1,343	100%	
30. My workload is reasonable.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	183	13.7%	% Positive
Agree	656	49.0%	62.7%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	183	13.7%	
Disagree	200	15.0%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	106	7.9%	22.9%
Do Not Know	10	0.7%	
# of Respondents	1,338	100%	
(+) 31. Managers communicate the goals and priorities of the organization.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	346	25.8%	% Positive
Agree	743	55.5%	81.3%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	148	11.0%	
Disagree	73	5.5%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	25	1.9%	7.3%
Do Not Know	4	0.3%	
# of Respondents	1,339	100%	
(+) 32. My organization has prepared employees for potential security threats.	Number	Percentage	
Strongly Agree	316	23.5%	% Positive
Agree	718	53.5%	77.0%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	181	13.5%	
Disagree	71	5.3%	% Negative
Strongly Disagree	36	2.7%	8.0%
Do Not Know	20	1.5%	
# of Respondents	1,342	100%	

(+) – Strength (-) – Weakness

Percentages may not add due to rounding

JOB SATISFACTION			
33. How satisfied are you with the information you receive from management on what's going on in your organization?	Number	Percentage	
Very Satisfied	225	16.70%	% Positive
Satisfied	632	47.1%	63.8%
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	283	21.1%	
Dissatisfied	164	12.2%	% Negative
Very Dissatisfied	39	2.9%	15.1%
# of Respondents	1,343	100%	
34. How satisfied are you with your involvement in decisions that affect your work?	Number	Percentage	
Very Satisfied	156	11.6%	% Positive
Satisfied	536	39.9%	51.5%
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	345	25.7%	
Dissatisfied	240	17.9%	% Negative
Very Dissatisfied	66	4.9%	22.8%
# of Respondents	1,343	100%	
35. How satisfied are you with your opportunity to get a better job in your organization?	Number	Percentage	
Very Satisfied	174	13.0%	% Positive
Satisfied	432	32.2%	45.2%
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	360	26.9%	
Dissatisfied	253	18.9%	% Negative
Very Dissatisfied	121	9.0%	27.9%
# of Respondents	1,340	100%	
36. How satisfied are you with the recognition you receive for doing a good job?	Number	Percentage	
Very Satisfied	246	18.3%	% Positive
Satisfied	549	40.9%	59.2%
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	256	19.1%	
Dissatisfied	208	15.5%	% Negative
Very Dissatisfied	84	6.2%	21.7%
# of Respondents	1,343	100%	
37. How satisfied are you with the policies and practices of your senior leaders?	Number	Percentage	
Very Satisfied	179	13.3%	% Positive
Satisfied	514	38.4%	51.8%
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	372	27.8%	
Dissatisfied	198	14.8%	% Negative
Very Dissatisfied	76	5.7%	20.5%
# of Respondents	1,339	100%	

(+) – Strength (-) – Weakness

Percentages may not add due to rounding

JOB SATISFACTION		
38. How satisfied are you with the training you receive for your present job?	Number	Percentage
Very Satisfied	197	14.7%
Satisfied	622	46.4%
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	272	20.3%
Dissatisfied	193	14.4%
Very Dissatisfied	56	4.2%
# of Respondents	1,340	100%
(+) 39. Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your job?	Number	Percentage
Very Satisfied	356	26.5%
Satisfied	673	50.1%
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	172	12.8%
Dissatisfied	110	8.2%
Very Dissatisfied	32	2.4%
# of Respondents	1,343	100%
(+) 40. Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your pay?	Number	Percentage
Very Satisfied	319	23.8%
Satisfied	655	48.8%
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	191	14.2%
Dissatisfied	128	9.5%
Very Dissatisfied	50	3.7%
# of Respondents	1,343	100%

% Positive
61.1%

% Negative
18.6%

% Positive
76.6%

% Negative
10.6%

% Positive
72.5%

% Negative
13.3%

(+) – Strength (-) – Weakness

Percentages may not add due to rounding